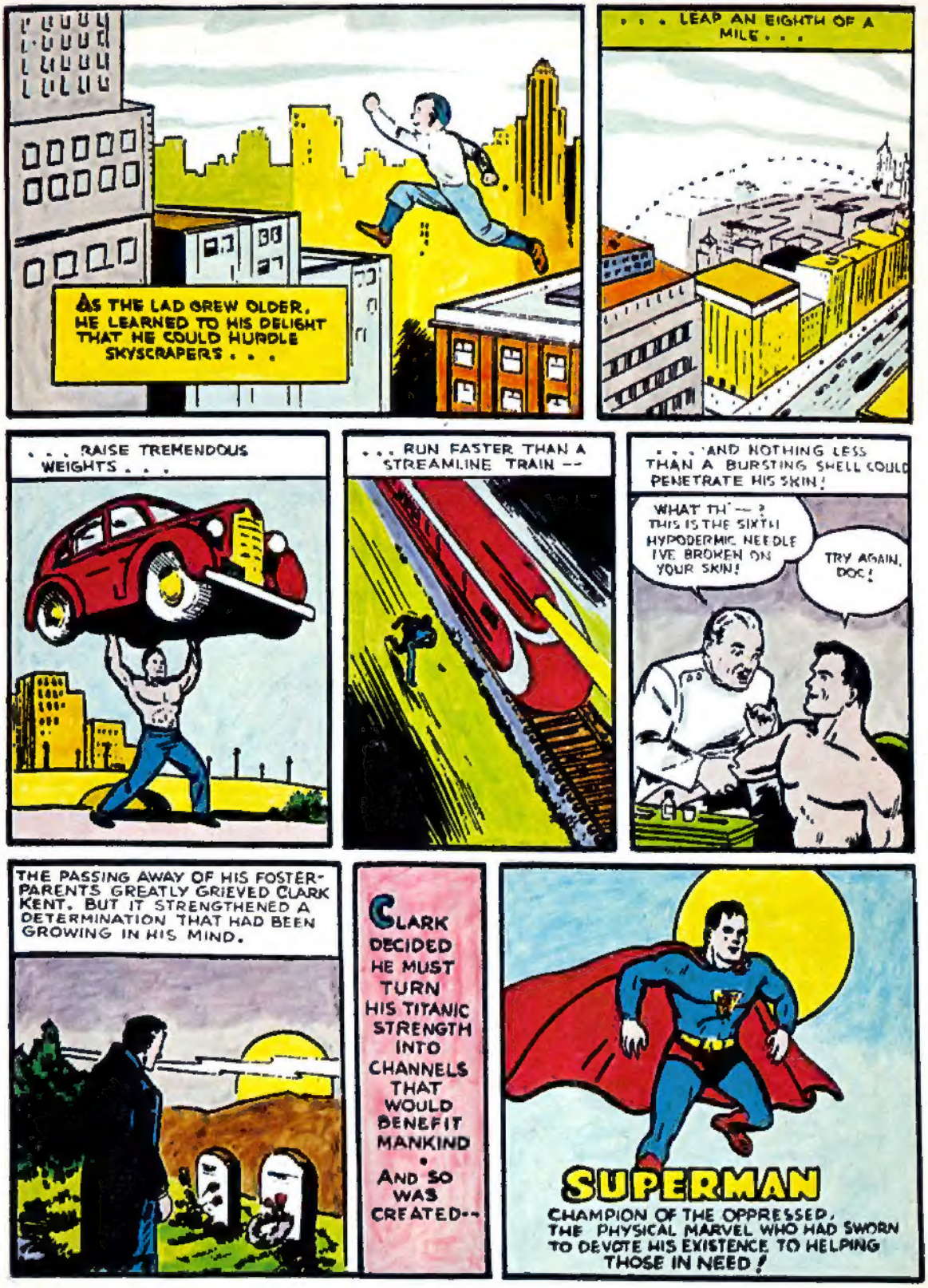
SUPER-HEROES CONFIDENTIAL

This Month: The Scoop on Superman! Intimate Pix and Fax of Comic Stars' Pasts

Some 35 years ago, Action Comics tried out a new comic strip about a guy from outer space who was shoved into a spaceship when he was a baby and got sent to Earth, where he grew up and ran around in blue tights. Was the comic book public going to swallow this? The answer was an indestructible, invincible "Yes!" and Superman became the most famous of all comic book heroes. But ol' Supe has gone through changes since the day he was first inked, as you can see from this reprint of a 1939 Superman story. Can you spot the differences?

SUPERMAN
by
JEROME SIEGEL and JOE SHUSTER
JUST BEFORE THE DOOMED PLANET, KRYPTON, EXPLODED TO FRAGMENTS, A SCIENTIST PLACED HIS INFANT SON WITHIN AN EXPERIMENTAL ROCKET-SHIP, LAUNCHING IT TOWARD EARTH!
WHEN THE VESSEL REACHED OUR PLANET, THE CHILD WAS FOUND BY AN ELDERLY COUPLE, THE KENTS.
LOOK, MARY! —IT'S A CHILD!
THE POOR THING! — ITS BEEN ABANDONED!
THE INFANT WAS TURNED OVER TO AN ORPHAN ASYLUM, WHERE IT ASTOUNDED THE ATTENDANTS WITH ITS FEATS OF STRENGTH.
WE — WE COULDN'T GET THAT SWEET CHILD OUT OF OUR MIND.
WE'VE COME TO ADOPT HIM IF YOU'LL PERMIT US.
I BELIEVE IT CAN BE ARRANGED. (— WHEW! THANK GOODNESS THEY'RE TAKING HIM AWAY BEFORE HE WRECKS THE ASYLUM!)
THE LOVE AND GUIDANCE OF HIS KINDLY FOSTER-PARENTS WAS TO BECOME AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE SHAPING OF THE BOY'S FUTURE.
NOW LISTEN TO ME, CLARK! THIS GREAT STRENGTH OF YOURS — YOU'VE GOT TO HIDE IT FROM PEOPLE OR THEY'LL BE SCARED OF YOU!
BUT WHEN THE PROPER TIME COMES, YOU MUST USE IT TO ASSIST HUMANITY.

© 1939 Detective Comics, Inc., © renewed 1966 National Periodical Publications, Inc.


AS THE LAD GREW OLDER, HE LEARNED TO HIS DELIGHT THAT HE COULD HURDLE SKYSCRAPERS . . .
. . . LEAP AN EIGHTH OF A MILE . . .
. . . RAISE TREMENDOUS WEIGHTS . . .
. . . RUN FASTER THAN A STREAMLINE TRAIN --
. . . AND NOTHING LESS THAN A BURSTING SHELL COULD PENETRATE HIS SKIN!
WHAT TH'— ? THIS IS THE SIXTH HYPODERMIC NEEDLE I'VE BROKEN ON YOUR SKIN!
TRY AGAIN, DOC!
THE PASSING AWAY OF HIS FOSTER-PARENTS GREATLY GRIEVED CLARK KENT. BUT IT STRENGTHENED A DETERMINATION THAT HAD BEEN GROWING IN HIS MIND.
CLARK DECIDED HE MUST TURN HIS TITANIC STRENGTH INTO CHANNELS THAT WOULD BENEFIT MANKIND . AND SO WAS CREATED--
SUPERMAN
CHAMPION OF THE OPPRESSED, THE PHYSICAL MARVEL WHO HAD SWORN TO DEVOTE HIS EXISTENCE TO HELPING THOSE IN NEED!

The first comic book in which Superman ever appeared, the June 1938 issue of Action Comics, has just been reprinted by National Periodical Publications, Inc., in a blown-up size, entitled, "Famous First Edition, Action No. 1" (obtainable for $1.50 sent to National at P.O. Box 116, Radio City Station, N.Y., NY 10019).

15 SECRETS OF SUPERMAN YOUR FRIENDS WILL NEVER GUESS!

1 How did Superman get the name Clark?
Martha Kent, Superman's foster mother, was Martha Clark before she married John Kent. She and her husband decided to give their adopted Superbaby her maiden name.

2 Where did Superman get his costume?
When the Kents discovered Superbaby inside the rocket ship which carried him to Earth, he was wrapped in three blankets. One was yellow, one was red, one was blue. The material was heat resistant and so strong it could not be cut. Superbaby unraveled the yarn for his mother, and Martha Kent knit him play clothes out of it. When Superbaby became Superboy, he unraveled the yarn again and his mother made him his uniform. The yarn was elastic so Superboy's costume stretched to fit.

3 How can Clark Kent use his Superman x-ray vision without melting his glasses?
Clark's glasses are made of heat-proof plastic from the rocket ship which brought him to Earth. Superboy shaped the plastic into lenses by chipping at it with his diamond-sharp nails.

4 How has Superman's costume changed?
Superman wears a yellow super-symbol on the back of his red cape. Years ago, the symbol was yellow and blue.

5 Did Superboy do well in school?
Superboy was only an average student. As Clark Kent, he was afraid people might suspect his secret identity if he did superwell.

6 How did Superman and Batman discover each other's secret identities?
Clark Kent and Bruce Wayne were sharing a stateroom on an ocean liner. One night while everyone was asleep, the ship caught fire. Both men began to change in the dark. As each was getting into his supercostume, a sudden flare-up in the fire lit their room revealing that Clark Kent was Superman and that Bruce Wayne was Batman.

7 What villains has Superman killed?
None, in recent years. It's against Superman's code to kill. If he misused his superpowers and killed an opponent, Superman would retire.

8 Has Superman ever been in love with anyone other than Lois Lane?
Yes. In college Superman was in love with a girl named Lori Lemeris. She was always in a wheelchair and most people thought she was crippled. In truth, Lori was a mermaid and sat blanketed in a wheelchair to hide her tail.

9 How old is Superman?
No one is sure, but his birthday is February 29th.

10 Has Superman ever failed?
Yes, at least twice. As a boy, he went back in time and tried to prevent Abe Lincoln from being shot. As a man, he returned to Krypton in the hope he could save it from destruction. Both times Superman learned that he could not change the past.

11 If Superman loves Lois, why haven't they married?
Actually, they have been married. For several years in the newspaper strip (though not in the comic book) Superman and Lois were husband and wife. Then the writer, bored by all that marital bliss, made them single again.

12 Is Superman mentally superior to everyone?
Superman certainly is smarter than all ordinary mortals, whose intelligence is on the sixth level of mind. However, Superman is no match for Brainiac, the evil computer in human form who thinks on the 12th mind level.

13 Can Superman live forever?
Though his aging process is for the moment invisible, Superman is destined to grow older and die.

14 What does Clark Kent do with his clothes when he changes into his Superman costume?
Superman's cape hides a pouch on its underside. When Clark changes to Superman, he compresses his clothes into a tiny package and stashes them in the pouch.

15 When did Superboy become Superman?
In his second year of college. Clark attended Metropolis University. While he was there, a street gang invaded the campus from a slum nearby and stole books, food, and other college property. As Superboy, Clark captured the gang.

Most of the students cheered Superboy. But one girl, Marla Harvey, accused him of being insensitive to the problems which made the gang destructive. "You try living in the ghetto without your superpowers and see how you do!" challenged Marla.

Marla left school to work in the slum. Superboy thought she was wrong, but her words bothered him. He decided to talk to her, but arrived too late. The run-down building she was in collapsed and Marla died in Superboy's arms.

After that, Superboy vowed to destroy the poverty that caused crime as well as crime itself. The recent events had made him more mature and he realized he'd become Superman.

A
VIGILANTE 407
Scan